

British Philatelic Bulletin

Volume 28

Number 1

September 1990



Contents

- 2 Greetings Stamps Win Award
NPM News
- 3 Astronomy
- 5 Definitive Update, Cylinder News
- 6 Courage
- 9 British Special Issues: 1983 Commonwealth Day
- 10 Historic Engravings of the GPO in 1844
- 12 GB Collectors Database
Gems from the R M Phillips Collection
- 13 Railway Letter Stamps
Royal Mail Exhibition Card
Competition
- 14 Themes of British Special Stamps: Aircraft
- 17 Telecom Postcard
£5 London Life Prestige Book
- 18 Posting Boxes
Student Stamp Designs
Illustrated Envelope Competition
- 19 Picture Post
- 20 Six Month Digest
New "Collections" Centre
- 21 Books
- 22 Commemorative Covers
- 24 September Digest, Events

Stop Press

The ink for machine postmarks was changed from black to red from 5 January. Gloucester, Oxford and Swindon offices have recently tested an improved black ink and it is intended to introduce this at all offices from 17 September.

Greetings Stamps Win Award

In June BBC TV organised a Design Competition with viewers voting for entries in four categories. We are pleased to announce that the 1990 Greetings stamps were the winning entry in the Graphics section. The stamps were shown on a TV programme in early June with comments from a representative of the design group, Michael Peters and Partners Limited; Dr Jean Alexander of the Stamp Advisory Committee; and stamp book collector and *Bulletin* writer, Len Newbury.

National Postal Museum News

Shown here is one of the four new NPM cards which go on sale on 11 September; the cards feature subjects from the "Postal Reform and the Penny Black" exhibition. Price 20p each plus handling charge. Orders to: National Postal Museum (Mail Order), King Edward Street, LONDON EC1A 1LP.



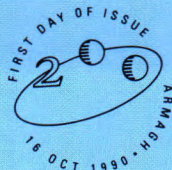
The Museum's shop has a limited stock of a card showing a boy posting a letter in a Victorian pillar box (1887) with added stamp machine. The card reproduces a photograph by Rosalind Wicks. Price 20p plus handling charge, subject to availability. A list of cards available from the Museum is available (enclose large SAE) from the Mail Order Dept, address above.



Mention was made in last month's *Bulletin* of an embroidered badge available from the Museum; the badge is illustrated this month. Price £2.10 plus handling charge. Museum handling charges are: 20p on orders up to £22, £1.75 on orders over £22 (sent by registered post).

The Main Gallery of the Museum will be closed to visitors between 11am and 2.30pm on 11 September. Other parts of the Museum, including the sales counter, will be open as usual.

16 October 1990



Four stamps will be issued on 16 October to mark the 200th anniversary of Armagh Observatory and the centenary of the British Astronomical Association. Armagh Observatory is noted for its important star catalogue and for recent pioneer studies of certain stars which show sudden, unpredictable flares or outbursts.

The BAA is the premier organisation of its kind; many of its observers are amateurs but work closely with professional organisations and many have gone on to become leading astronomical researchers.

The designs of the four stamps trace the development of man's understanding and exploration of space: **22p** — The modern day exploration of space, illustrated by the Armagh Observatory (centre panel), the Jodrell Bank radio telescope (left) and the La Palma telescope (right); **26p** — Man's understanding increases, illustrated by the moon governing the tides on earth (centre) and early attempts to see into space by telescope (left and right); **31p** — Man begins to understand the scientific principles governing space, illustrated by the Greenwich Old Observatory (centre) and early astronomical equipment (left and right); **37p** — The beginning of Man's realisation of the existence of space, illustrated by Stonehenge (centre), the gyroscope (left) and navigation by the stars (right).

Technical Details

The stamps were designed by Jeff Fisher and printed by The House of Questa Limited in offset-lithography on phosphor-coated paper. They are of "almost square" format, 37 x 35mm, printed in sheets of 100 with PVA Dextrin gum. Perforation measures 14½ x 14.

Presentation Pack

The pack (No. 212) will cost £1.45; it was designed by Trickett & Webb Limited with text by well-known astronomer and TV personality Patrick Moore. It was printed by Moore & Matthes (Printers) Limited.

Royal Mail Stamp Cards

Cards, featuring enlargements of the stamp

designs, will be available approximately two weeks before the stamp issue, price 19p each. They are numbered 130A-D.

First Day Cover

The Royal Mail first day cover will be available from the British Philatelic Bureau, "Collections" centres, philatelic counters and main post offices approximately two weeks before 16 October, price 19p. Two pictorial postmarks will be used for the first day cover service — one for the Bureau, the other for Armagh.

A first day cover service will be provided by the Bureau with the official Royal Mail cover addressed to the destination required with the stamps cancelled with the requested postmark. Application forms, available from the Bureau and main post offices, should be returned not later than 16 October.

Customers requiring only the pictorial postmarks may obtain them under the reposting facility by sending on the first day of issue a stamped envelope under an outer cover endorsed "Special First Day of Issue handstamp" to: British Philatelic Bureau, 20 Brandon Street, EDINBURGH EH3 5TT (Bureau postmark) or Scotland & N Ireland Special Handstamp Centre, Glasgow LDO, George Square, GLASGOW G2 1AA (Armagh postmark).

First Day Posting Boxes will be provided at most main post offices for those collectors who wish to post covers to receive the standard, non-pictorial "First Day of Issue" handstamps.

As usual pictorial First Day postmarks, showing the City coat of arms and the Cathedral will be used respectively by the London North SHC, City of London LDO, King Edward Street, LONDON EC1A 1AA and the Pictorial First Day of Issue Postmark Duty, Durham Post Office, 33 Silver Street, DURHAM DH1 3RE.

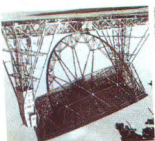
Souvenir Cover

A souvenir cover, of similar design to the first day cover, will be available from "Collections" centres and philatelic counters from 17 October, price 19p. This will be on sale for one year.

Mrs J Robinson
200 Manorlier Road
ILKESTON
Derbyshire
DE7 4AB



studies of certain stars which show
sudden, unpredictable flares or
outbursts. In 1960 some of the British
Astronomical Association, whose
research is second to none, and
organisation of its kind. Members of
the Association have made many
important contributions. They have
kept watch on the changing surfaces

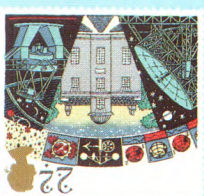
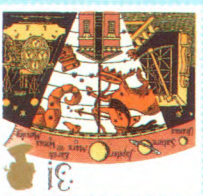


Artist Robert Raftery's design

—was Count Astronomer to King
the seventh Duke of Devonshire, and was
the best of his time. He discovered
made telescopes which were much
turned his attention to astronomy and
spent most of his long life in England.
Herschel, a Harrogate musician who
In the eighteenth century William



Artist Robert Raftery's design



Definitive Update

Further details can now be given of the new stamps and books being issued in connection with the revised postal tariffs effective from 17 September.

Stamp Books

The cover designs of the two new machine books continue the Aeroplane and Mills themes begun last October. The new **50p** book (Aeroplanes No 3) shows the BAC 1-11 and BAC VC10; designs by Peter Hutton. The book contains three 17p stamps — two with phosphor band left and one with band right — and one label.



The **£1** book (Mills No 3) features the Jack and Jill Mills at Clayton, Sussex, design by Jeremy Sancha. The book contains three 22p stamps with two phosphor bands, two 17p stamps with band right and three labels.

Both books will be available from the British Philatelic Bureau, "Collections" centres and philatelic counters from 4 September; they will

be available from post offices with the appropriate stamp vending machines from 17 September, date of the postal tariff increase. The **£1** book will only be available from the electronic dual vend machines. Existing 50p and **£1** books containing 15p and 20p stamps will be withdrawn from general sale but will continue to be available from philatelic outlets.

Stamp Rolls

Details of the new 17p and 22p rolls were published last month. The rolls containing 15p stamps (codes RL, SF) and 20p stamps (TL, SG) will be withdrawn from post offices on 15 September but will remain on sale at philatelic outlets for a further year.

Presentation Pack

The pack containing the new sheet stamps will be No. 23, price **£1.95**.

Cylinder News

The cylinders used for the Thomas Hardy stamp were: 1A (vermilion) 1B (greenish yellow) 1C (pale lake-brown) 1D (deep brown) 1E (light red-brown) 1F (black). The Queen Mother stamps were from: 20p — 1A (silver) 1B (greenish yellow) 1C (magenta) 1D (turquoise-blue) 1E (grey-black); 29p — 2A (silver) 2B (indigo) 1C (grey-blue); 34p — 1A (silver) 1B (lemon) 1C (red) 4D (new blue) 1E (grey-black); 37p — 2A (silver) 1B (sepia) 1C (stone).

The Gallantry stamps were printed from: 20p GC — 1A 1B 1C 1D 1E; 20p MC & Medal — 2A 2B 1C; 20p DSC & DSM — 1A 1B 1C 4D 1E; 20p VC — 2A 1B 1C; 20p DFC & DFM — 1A 1B 1C 1D 1E 1F.

The cylinders/plates used for the new NVI books issued on 7 August were: Walsall 4 x 2nd — W1W1W1; 4 x 1st — W1W1W1, 10 x 2nd W1W1W1; 10 x 1st W1W1; Harrison 10 x 2nd B1; 10 x 1st B3. Numbers do not appear in books printed by Questa.

Plates used for recent printings of the Castles high values are: **£1** — 1J; **£1.50** — 2H, 2I; **£2** — 1J, 1K, 1M, 1N, 1O, 2O, 2P, 2Q, 2R; **£5** — 1F. Harrisons have informed us that the 50p definitive in new colour has only been printed from cylinder 35, not from cylinder 34 as stated in the June *Bulletin*. This resulted from a misunderstanding of information supplied, a last printing of the stamp in the old colour was made (cylinder 34) at about the same time as the first printing from the new colour (cylinder 35).

Courage

BARBARA LAST

Courage is a quality we all admire. It is essential to cope with everyday life itself, and the example of a single act of courage is contagious, and spreads to stiffen the resolve of others.

Victoria Cross

During the Crimean War it was felt that there was need of a medal to mark individual acts of gallantry, regardless of rank. "It does not seem right that deeds of heroism should go unrewarded ... because they are done by privates or officers below the rank of major." The VC was instituted in 1856 by Queen Victoria who personally altered the wording on her new decoration to the simple "For Valour". From horseback she pinned the Cross onto the first 62 recipients at a grand parade in Hyde Park on 26 June 1857. One legendary hero is reputed to have stood unflinching when the Cross was accidentally pinned to his actual flesh.

The Cross was to be awarded only to serving members of the armed forces who performed some signal act of valour in the presence of the enemy. Originally the ribbon was crimson for the Army and blue for the Navy, but since the inclusion of the RAF in 1918, all ribbons have been crimson. Amendments widened eligibility to local forces and civilians under orders of Imperial troops in the field. Major C Heaphy, Auckland Militia, was the first non-regular serviceman to win the VC in operations "undertaken against the Insurgent native tribes of Our Colony of NZ." By Royal Warrant of 1920 the VC can be awarded to a dead hero, and Commonwealth fighting forces and service women are now eligible. It has become increasingly difficult to win, and more frequently is a posthumous award.

The VC, used as a motif for many relevant handstamps, has been depicted on stamps from Montserrat (1971, S.G. 275) and Turks & Caicos Islands (with HMS *Victoria*, 1987, S.G. 902). The State of Victoria featured it on a charity stamp in 1900 (S.G. 346) to raise funds for the Victorian Mounted Rifles (Australia 1985, S.G. 968) who became casualties in the Boer War. Several holders of the VC are shown



on stamps. One of the earliest Crosses was awarded to George Henry Ingouville (Jersey, 1985 S.G. 375), Captain of the Mast, serving on the steam frigate HMS *Arrogant* in the Baltic Fleet. In the attack on Russian shore batteries at Viborg on 13 July 1855, a direct hit on the ship's cutter killed the midshipman and sent the damaged boat and wounded crew drifting under the Russian guns. Ingouville, badly wounded, slid overboard and tried to tow the boat away by its painter. Lt. George D Dowell, Royal Marines, of HMS *Magicienne* nearby leapt into a gig, and disregarding the heavy musket and grapeshot fire, rescued four men and the cutter. Lt. Dowell and Ingouville became two of the 12 naval recipients at the VC investiture in Hyde Park.

Another early award went to Major (later Field Marshal Sir) George Stuart White (Isle of Man 1983, S.G. 254) who, during the Second Afghan War, personally led his Highlanders and



captured a fortified hill fort at Charasiah on 6 October 1879. This warrior later defended Ladysmith for 120 days during the Boer War. Africa was the scene of much fighting. After the massacre of the 24th Regiment at Isandlwana in January 1879 (South Africa 1979, S.G. 459), some 3,000 elated Zulus attacked the small hospital at Rorke's Drift (S.G. 461) where a total of 141 all ranks under the command of Lieutenants Bromhead and Chard beat off repeated attacks. Eleven VCs were awarded for this action. No Cross is mentioned on these stamps but the First Day of Issue cancellation featured the VC, and the miniature sheet label showed the VC and the John Chard Decoration.

First World War

During the Great War the Army lost 60,000 men in a single day in the Battle of the Somme. Jack Counter (Jersey 1971, S.G. 63) was a 19 year old in France who volunteered as a runner to find out the enemy strength as well as the position and number of British survivors after the Germans had over-run part of the British front line in 1918. Ignoring the hail of machine-gun fire sweeping the open slope on which six

volunteers had already died, Counter returned with the vital information which led to the retaking of the sector. He then carried messages five times to Company HQ through an enemy artillery barrage.

"Tiny" Bernard Freyberg, shown on a New Zealand stamp issued in April 1990, was in combat throughout the whole of the 1915 Gallipoli campaign. During the ANZAC landing he swam ashore alone to light decoy fires. In France he took part in the fiercest battles and was wounded nine times. His VC was awarded on 16 December 1917, not for a specific action but in recognition of his legendary courage over a period of time. He became the youngest Brigadier-General in the British Army, and commanded New Zealand forces in 1941 in Crete. In the desert and Italy later he won a third bar to the DSO.

Two recipients of the VC during the Second World War have featured on stamps. In the Pacific in June 1944 Cpl. Sefanaia Sukanaivolou, Fiji Infantry (Fiji 1969, S.G. 410), was ambushed with his platoon by the Japanese in Bougainville. He retrieved two of his badly injured men, and reaching a third, fell, shot in the thigh and groin. To prevent his men risking their lives in a useless rescue attempt, he deliberately dragged himself out to die under a hail of enemy bullets. His self-sacrifice won the first VC to a non-European colonial soldier.

In Europe in September 1944, three months after D-Day, three-quarters of the parachutists dropped at Arnhem died or were captured. Five VCs were awarded. The only survivor was the Manxman, Major Robert Cain (Isle of Man 1981, S.G. 206) commanding a rifle company of S. Staffords at Osterbeck Crossroads. Although severely wounded, and armed with only a light Piat gun, for six days he defended his sector repelling tanks and utterly demoralising the enemy's incessant attacks and superior numbers.

George Cross

HM King George VI announced in a nationwide broadcast on 23 September 1940 the institution of The George Cross with these words: "Many and glorious are the deeds of gallantry done during these perilous but famous days. In order that they should be worthily and promptly recognised, I have decided to create at once a new mark of honour for men and women in all walks of civilian life."

The George Cross is "awarded only for acts of the greatest heroism or of the most conspic-



uous courage in circumstances of extreme danger" as cited in the Royal Warrant and is intended primarily for civilians but can be bestowed on military personnel for acts for which purely military Honours are not usually granted.

Only 152 George Crosses have been awarded directly, 82 were to those who died in their actions, excluding those exchanged for the Albert Medal (1866) and the Edward Medal (1907), and of these exchanges, a total of 396 names appear on The George Cross roll of honour, including that of the island of Malta in recognition of the gallantry of its inhabitants during the bombardment in 1942.

The first George Cross to be gazetted was on 30 September 1940 for Thomas Alderson, a Detachment Leader, Air Raid Precautions, for sustained bravery during enemy air attacks on Bridlington, Yorkshire. The latest George Cross to be granted was to Captain Robert Nairac of the Grenadier Guards, posthumously, who was callously murdered by the Provisional Irish Republican Army in South Armagh in 1977; for security reasons the award was not gazetted until 13 February 1979.

Of the 396 men and women who have received the award, only 74 are alive today, 20 residing overseas.

Malta's 1956 3d definitive (SG 272) depicts the document signed by King George VI awarding the GC to the island.

Naval Awards

Only eight Conspicuous Service Crosses were awarded between 1901 and 1914 when this naval decoration was renamed the **Distinguished Service Cross** (DSC). It marked distinguished service before the enemy performed by Naval and Royal Marine WOs and officers below the rank of Lt/Cdre. This later developed to include the rank of Commander, equivalent ranks in the Army serving on board armed merchant ships and RAF serving afloat but not with the Fleet, i.e. Air/Sea Rescue. The **Distinguished Service Medal** (DSM), instituted in October 1914 was reserved for RN and RM NCOs and ratings, merchant seamen, airmen and soldiers afloat, plus WRNS showing gallantry ashore during enemy action.

Army Decorations

Likewise the Army decorations **Military Cross** (MC) and **Military Medal** (MM) were bestowed according to rank. The MC, instituted in

December 1914, is intended for WOs and junior officers, Captain and below, and the MM (March 1916) for NCOs and other ranks for "bravery in the field". Various amendments restricted eligibility to fighting personnel, and extended the appropriate awards to RN and RM officers and men serving in France, to RAF for gallantry on the ground, to the Home Guard and to Allied, Indian and Colonial troops. The terms "in action" and "under fire" applied to the Easter Risings in Ireland, bombardments, air raids, and other events which produced conditions equal to actual combat. Nurses and civilian women serving with the Army could not receive the MC because they were not officers. But from June 1916 the MM could be awarded to women, both British and foreign, for "bravery and devotion under fire".



Air Force Recognition

The last and youngest of these military decorations depicted on the Gallantry stamps (issued 11 September) are the **Distinguished Flying Cross** (DFC) and **Distinguished Flying Medal** (DFM) instituted in June 1918. The Cross was reserved for RAF officers and WOs to reward "an act or acts of valour, courage or devotion to duty performed whilst flying in active operations against the enemy". The violet/white stripes of the ribbon were originally horizontal, but were changed to diagonal the following year. Equivalent ranks in the Fleet Air Arm and Royal Marines were later included. The DFM was awarded to RAF NCOs and men "For Courage" under the same conditions, and men of the Fleet Air Arm serving with air forces of the Crown also became eligible.

Truly this new set of stamps is a gallant array.

Reference:

British Gallantry Awards — Abbott & Tamplin.

Commonwealth Day

British Special Issues: No.160

FRANCIS KENNEDY

As far back as 1958, the British Post Office issued stamps marking the 6th British Empire and Commonwealth Games, held at Cardiff, and in 1965 there was a Commonwealth Arts Festival issue. The 9th Games — by then styled “British Commonwealth Games” were commemorated in 1970 but it was not until 1983 that Commonwealth Day, originally proposed by the Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau and instituted in 1977 by the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in London, was given philatelic recognition.

14 March was designated Commonwealth Day but it was on 9 March 1983 that the special issue was released. With a subject of such diverse character, the stamp designer’s problem was to produce four stamps none of which would offend any member-country and did not overstate a sense of unity or in anyway suggest British domination of the Commonwealth. It was an Oxfordshire landscape painter, Donald Hamilton Fraser, who solved the problem in a totally non-political fashion by designing four



stamps which featured distinctive types of landscapes from various, un-named areas within the Commonwealth. None of the designs was captioned although each one carried the inscription COMMONWEALTH DAY 14 MARCH 1983, and each bore, in silver, the Commonwealth logo — an ornamental “C” enclosing a Globe.

The designs were: 15½p, a tropical island; 19½p, a desert; 26p, temperate farmland; 29p, a mountain range. There were a few minor

constant flaws on all values but only two values are listed with just one major constant flaw for each: 26p — a pale area at the edge to the left of “26p” on row 7, stamp 7; 29p — a broken “4” in “14” at foot of the design on row 3 stamp 9. Printing was in photogravure and the issued sheets were of 100 stamps (2 panes, 5 x 10).



The issue was withdrawn on 9 March 1984 when the sales figures were: 15½p — 37,646,000; 19½p — 7,919,300; 26p — 7,385,000; 29p — 7,046,400. The PHQ cards, one for each value, were numbered 66a-d; 200,000 sets were produced.

Commonwealth Day

All of the independent countries at that time in voluntary membership of this “most successful non-organisation in history” issued stamps to mark Commonwealth Day in 1983. This was the outcome of a decision by the Heads of Government at their Melbourne meeting in 1981. The Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Secretariat, Shridath (“Sunny”) Ramphal, announced an omnibus issue for Commonwealth Day (14 March) in 1983 and subsequently on every fifth year. The idea appears to have been dropped as there were no equivalent stamps issued in 1988. Curiously, too, Stanley Gibbons do not include the 1983 issues in their grouped listing of all the other Commonwealth omnibus issues.

In 1983 it was planned that 20,000 complete collections of the stamps should be assembled and sold packed as “a limited edition” with profits going to the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation, a multilateral aid agency organised by the Secretariat and funded normally by voluntary contributions from member countries. This is a Commonwealth activity deserving of greater publicity than it receives and it was hoped that the special stamps of 1983 would help — but did they?

Historic Engravings of the GPO in 1844

KEVIN SQUELCH

Post Office Archives

It is very rewarding when a series of coincidences can bring something back to life for future generations to enjoy.

Eighteen months ago while looking for items to display at Stamp World London 90 I came across a folder in Post Office Archives headed "Two Steel plates bearing pictures of interior views G.P.O.". On inspection I found two black pieces of steel, measuring 205 x 290mm. It was virtually impossible, because of the accumulated grime, to decipher anything of the engraving. However, at the same time, a donation of books to the Archives revealed among some loose papers, two tattered engravings along with pages of text. Fortuitously the engravings and prints came together and it was realised they belonged together, thereby revealing the former glory of the steel plates.



The General Post Office East and "Bull and Mouth" Inn. Painted by James Pollard and engraved by R G Reeves, 1830. (Post Office Picture Library)

Hidden Images

The images hidden under the dirt were two views of the interior of GPO East, in St Martin's le Grand — the Inland Office and the Letter Carriers Room. GPO East, former headquarters of the Post Office, was designed by Sir Robert Smirke (1781-1867) who also designed the British Museum. It was constructed with a basement of granite but the

building itself was brick entirely faced with Portland stone in Grecian Ionic style. The cost of approximately £235,000 also included fixtures and fittings. It was built on a historic site which had formerly been a monastery (St Martin's) and college of the Middle Ages, where the curfew signalling the closing of the town gate was rung. St Martin's also had the right to grant sanctuary; this was not abolished until 1697. GPO East was opened in 1829 and stood until 1912.

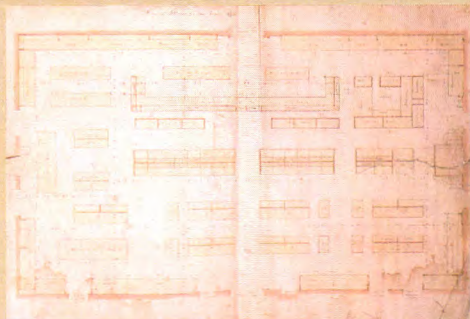
As Smirke's original plans for the building have survived it was possible to find the position of these two rooms. The plans show they were connecting rooms, the door on the left of the Inland Office print being the same door on the left in the Letter Carriers Room (see illustrations).

The Inland Office was 88 feet long by 56 feet wide and 28 feet high. Being enclosed by other rooms its only natural light came through glazed compartments in the ceiling and three windows high in the north wall. Above the lobby door on the east side was a small projecting bay or oriel window commanding a view of the whole room. This room was used for the sorting of letters to be dispatched for places all over the country.

The Letter Carriers Room handled mails from the Inland Office. In the mornings the letter carriers sorted mail for London delivery, and in the evenings, as shown in this scene, the room became the newspaper office. The Post Office was at that time the major distributor of newspapers and some ½ million were handled here every week. The room was 103 feet long by 25 feet wide. The upper floor or gallery accommodated 100 clerks and the lower floor 270. Access between the floors was facilitated by two spiral staircases, one for the ascent, the other for descent.

The Original Prints

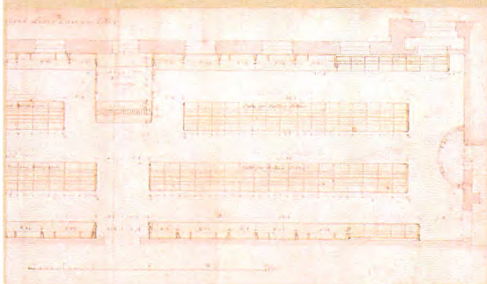
Now came the hunt for the people responsible for these engravings, and the date of them. The clues from the few pages of text found at the same time as the plates, and research in the Guildhall Library, provided the answer.



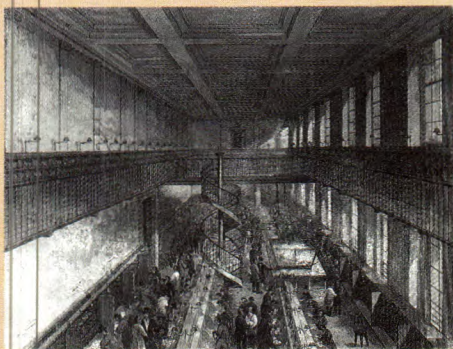
Sir Robert Smirke's original plan for the GPO Inland Office



The 1844 engraving of the Inland Office



Smirke's plan for the GPO Letter Carriers Room



The 1844 engraving of the Letter Carriers Room

These two prints were commissioned for a series called "London Interiors" (1841-44). This was published by Joseph Mead of Gough Square, London, in monthly parts, each part containing two engravings with eight pages of text, at a price of one shilling, 20 parts completing a volume. The two prints on the Post Office were published in June 1844 being part 34, but this second volume ran out of steam and was brought to an end with part 38. Complete sets of both series were sold bound together.

The artist, Sir John Gilbert (1817-97), was also the chief artist for the second series, from September 1843. He also worked on *The Illustrated London News* from the first publication on 14 May 1842 for a period of some 30 years. It is estimated that his contributions to papers, books and journals all drawn by himself upon the wood-block amount to some 30,000. When he was about 20 some of his pen and ink drawings

were shown to Mulready who discerned Gilbert's great aptitude for illustration and advised him to seek employment in drawing on wood. He was on close terms with Thackeray and Trollope, and on acrimonious terms with Charles Dickens, Gilbert later became President of the Royal Watercolour Society.

The engraver, Thomas Henry Ellis (fl. 1860) worked on landscapes and figures. He later set up an engraving and publishing business.

Contemporary Reprints

After discovering the background to these engravings it seemed only fitting to do something with them. Another search was involved to locate a craftsman who still worked in this specialised field who could properly advise on their restoration. On examination it was thought possible that because of the quality of the original engravings they could still be

printed from; however much painstaking care would be needed to remove the century of grime and restore them.

How these engravings found their way to the Archives will probably remain a mystery, as no accompanying paperwork has been found. It was discovered however that these engravings were on display at the Uniform Penny Postage Jubilee in 1890. It, therefore, seemed an ideal way to celebrate the 150th anniversary this year by producing a limited edition print run from the original 1844 steel plates.

After seeing the first trial proofs and the quality of the printing a limited edition of 990 numbered prints was commissioned. They were printed onto acid-free Rocket Mouldmade paper by Jack Shirreff. The design and letterpress printing for this edition is by Jonathan Stephenson of the Rocket Press.

These exclusive numbered prints are sold ready for framing. They were sold as commemorative items at Stamp World London 90 but some numbered pairs and single prints are still available at £35 per print. Remittances should be made payable to "The Post Office". Orders will be filled in strict order of receipt, and should be sent to: Post Office Archives, 23 Glasshill Street, LONDON SE1 0BQ. Intending purchasers may call at the Archives, open Monday to Friday, 9am to 4.15pm.

Sources:

Post Office Archives — POST 91/7-10; Portfolio Collection.

B. Hunniset: *An Illustrated Dictionary of British Steel Engravers*.

Dictionary of National Biography.

Jan Speirs: *John Gilbert — A Cavalier in Heart*.

B. Adam: *London Illustrated 1604-1851*.

GB Collectors Database

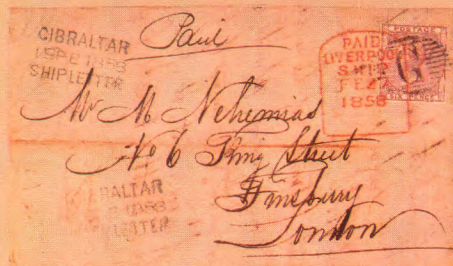
In the May *Bulletin* mention was made of a software package produced by QB Software. The company announces two new databases in the format of their GB Machin computer database for IBM compatibles. The GB Definitives Database now includes all issues from 1840 to 1990, Victoria to Machins. The GB Commemoratives database includes all special issues from 1924 to 1990 with errors, gutter pairs, presentation packs, first day covers, PHQ cards, etc. The complete GB database costs £17.50, postage paid. Orders/enquiries: Dr P R Adby, QB Software, 50 North Way, SEAFORD, East Sussex, BN25 3HP, Tel. 0323-895077.

Gems from the R M Phillips Collections

177. 1858 Gibraltar Ship Letter

The Phillips Collection contains a good selection of the 1855-57 issue without corner letters.

The used stamps of this issue will be found in Volume 35 and include some fine blocks of each value, three examples of the 4d watermarked small Garter on white and both 6d and 1s on azure. The hand-made paper varied considerably and on one page are some eight examples of the 1s showing thin and stout, white and azure, glazed and unglazed papers. The covers include one bearing two 4d medium Garter on blue, a 6d on a Gibraltar Ship Letter, pairs of the 6d and 1s used together from Gibraltar, two 6d on azure, one used with a 1d rose-red to pay the registration fee, and a pair of the 1s on azure.



The ship letter from Gibraltar to London is shown here, it bears two strikes of the GIBRALTAR SHIP LETTER datestamp of 19 February 1858; the stamp is cancelled by the large "G" handstamp and a PAID LIVERPOOL SHIP datestamp of 27 February 1858. It can be seen on page 12 of Volume 35 in the Phillips Collection at the National Postal Museum. The Museum, in the London Chief Post Office, King Edward Street, London EC1, is open Monday to Thursday 9.30am to 4.30pm, Friday 9.30am to 4pm. Admission free.

Railway Letter Stamps

Shown here are recent issues of railway letter stamps from the Mid Hants, Talyllyn and Welshpool & Llanfair railways. Details of the stamps and addresses from which to order were given in the July *Bulletin*, pages 271, 280. The two Welshpool & Llanfair stamps were issued on 10 April, the Mid Hants stamp on 30 June and the Talyllyn miniature sheet on 5 July.



Royal Mail Exhibition Card

From 16 October Exhibition Card No. 4 will be available from the British Philatelic Bureau with a special handstamp for Autumn Stampex/BPE, price £1.50 plus handling charge (18p UK, 34p overseas). Cards sold at the exhibition will bear a cachet. Collectors unable to visit the exhibition can obtain cacheted cards from the Bureau, price £1.50. Orders for cacheted cards must be received by 21 October. Cards with Stamp World, Belgica and New Zealand 1990 handstamps (but not cachets) are still available from the Bureau, price £1.50 each.

Competition



Enter this month's competition and stand a chance of winning a Royal Mail Stamp Collection Jigsaw and a pack of the High Value Castle stamps. Answer the questions below, the answers to some will be found in this month's *Bulletin*, and send with your name and address on a postcard to: September Bulletin Competition, National Postal Museum, King Edward Street, LONDON EC1A 1LP to arrive by 31 October.

The senders of the first four all-correct entries drawn will each be sent one of the jigsaws and the Castles pack; four runners-up will be sent presentation packs of the Gallantry stamps. Answers and winners' names will be published in the December *Bulletin*.

1. Where were the British Empire and Commonwealth Games held in 1958?
2. Who designed the 1974 Universal Postal Union centenary stamps?
3. In which city is the new "Galleries" Post Office and Collections Centre?
4. What was the date of issue of the Industrial Archaeology miniature sheet?
5. Which observatory celebrates its 200th anniversary this year?

The competition is not open to staff of Royal Mail Stamps & Philately, the National Postal Museum, their agents and their families. No correspondence will be entered into; the Editor's decision will be final.

The winners of the June Competition were: M Hogarty of New Zealand, R White of Bucks, Mrs Dewell of Kent, C Danks of Bromsgrove (Postal Reform book) and G Macmillan of Bahrain, P Newell of Nottingham, E Bunn of Herts and J Lawson of Forfar (miniature sheet FDC).

The answers were: 1. Stone mason; 2. Decimus Burton; 3. 2,260; 4. 12 June; 5. Stan Laurel; 6. John Marriott.

Our thanks to all who entered.

Themes of British Special Stamps

1. Aircraft

G E DRABBLE

Aircraft have featured in eight special issues so far: 1963 Lifeboat Conference; 1965 Battle of Britain; 1968 Anniversaries; 1969 Concorde and Anniversaries; 1974 Universal Postal Union Centenary; 1986 Royal Air Force and 1988 Transport and Communications. So far, Aircraft has not been the specific subject of an issue — perhaps surprisingly, when we call that Horses, Trains, Motor cars, Ships and even Cycling have all achieved that status. The appearance of aircraft on 21 stamps seems relatively generous, until contrasted with horses, which can be found on 42 stamps. As a nation obsessed with air travel, perhaps we ought to consider the issue of a set of stamps dedicated to the recognition of this ubiquitous medium of transport.

The debut of aircraft in British stamp design occurred unobtrusively on 31 May 1963 when a Westland “Widgeon” helicopter, in red, was shown winching an injured man from a 37 ft “Oakley” type lifeboat, in blue. The scene featured on the 2½d stamp of a set of three marking the 9th International Lifeboat Conference in Edinburgh in June of that year. The designer, David Gentleman, using woodcuts he engraved himself, employed a very old art-form for the first time in stamp design. This was his second accepted design; in the following years he was to be involved with a further 24 designs.

Spirit of Battle

Wartime aeroplanes were the subjects of a *se-tenant* block of six 4d stamps marking the 25th anniversary of the Battle of Britain, issued on 13 September 1965. (Two separate stamps of values 9d and 1s3d completed the issue, but did not portray aircraft, although the higher value, showing vapour trails in the sky above St Paul’s Cathedral, implied their presence.) The designers of the block, David Gentleman and Rosalind Dease, did not attempt to show detail, but invoked the spirit of the battle by means of a series of silhouettes. “Our” planes were represented by a dark olive-green, while enemy planes were in grey. These sombre colours were relieved on two only of the six stamps; by a red-and-blue roundel on a Spitfire wing on one, and by a horizontal blue sea, receiving a sinking Dornier bomber on the other. Although lacking detail and colour, as silhouettes must, the shapes are remarkably accurate, and no-one who, like myself, went through an elementary course of aircraft recognition, can fail to recognise the characteristic elliptical wing-shape of the Spitfire, or the sinister W-shape of the Junkers “Stuka” dive-bomber. Details of the design are not available, but from what we have learned about other issues from David Gentleman, one presumes that these action-filled scenes were the outcome of the study of perhaps hundreds of



photographs, drawings and films. This issue, The first issue of a set of Anniversaries was the second occasion of an aircraft appearing. This set of four stamps appeared on 29 May 1968, and the 1s stamp, designed by Clive Abbott, marked the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Royal Air Force, when, in April 1918, the original Royal Flying Corps joined forces with



the Royal Naval Air Service. The stamp imaginatively spans the 25 years of depicting a Sopwith "Camel" biplane of the First World War, filling the foreground, with a flight of three "Lightning" jets streaking vapour trails diagonally across the background. The dynamism of the design gains rather than loses by the loss of three of the four wing-tips, cut off by the frame of the stamp.

Back to the Future

On 3 March 1969, past history gave place to history in the making, when a set of three stamps was issued to commemorate the first flight of the Anglo-French supersonic *Concorde*. Michael and Sylvia Goaman designed the 4d



stamp, a sleek white Concorde with a yellow-orange strake, viewed from the left, and slightly above, with a remote view of a greenish British Isles and coast of France, with a blue-green sea merging into a deep blue sky; an attractively symbolic bridging of the Channel. For the 9d stamp, David Gentleman used a more formal design, based on superposing a blue "plan"

silhouette on a green "elevation", with the twin French and British flags in the upper left hand corner. A variant form of superposing was used on the 1s6d stamp, also by Gentleman, with a stark white Concorde nose cutting across the rear hull and tail fin, in blue. Now, more than 20 years on, Concorde can be seen as an historic step forward, in technology, and in international co-operation, but many of us can recall the 8½ years following the first liaison between the British and French governments, in November 1962, as a period fraught with mistrust of the competence of governments, and anxiety as costs escalated and sonic booms threatened every glass window beneath the flight path. Now, with Concorde established as a valuable part of our lives, it may be salutary to reflect that the Channel Tunnel will doubtless eventually take its place as a monument to the march forward of technology, and stamp collectors of the future may be appraising an issue marking the 25th anniversary of its opening.



Almost exactly a month later, in April 1969, we were back into history again with a second issue of "Anniversaries". Of five stamps, two marked historic flights. The 5d, designed by the late Philip Sharland, commemorates the 50th anniversary of the first non-stop Atlantic flight by Alcock and Brown on 15/16 June 1919. A drawing of the elevation of the Vickers "Vimy" biplane fills the stamp, with a background of a facsimile of the newspaper report on the flight with photographs of the two aeronauts. The 1s9d stamp was designed by Michael and Sylvia Goaman, and marked the first England-Australia flight by Ross and Keith Smith, engineer Bennet, and mechanic Spiers, in 28 days, from 12 November 1919. That year must have been a good year for Vickers, as the plane was again a

Vickers "Vimy", shown on this stamp with a globe marking the route taken. Neither stamp shows any indication of scale, but one feels that the four men may have been somewhat cramped during this later flight. The plane photograph on a light yellow background on the left, contrasting with a green globe, makes for an attractive design. The Queen's head is located, very unusually, at the upper centre of the stamp.

A set of four stamps designed by Rosalind Dease appeared on 12 June 1974 to mark the centenary of the Universal Postal Union. The four "subjects", a ship, two planes and a postal van, are all executed in light coloured silhouette on a white ground, and each stamp bears a facsimile of a contemporary handstamp, in a contrasting colour. The design is bold and simple, as collectors had come to expect from this talented designer (this was her eighth commission), and makes for one of the more striking displays in the album, especially when mounted



on a black sheet. One feels that the choice of size and colour of the handstamp must have been a matter of some careful thought, to avoid the rather obvious risk of accusations of using stamps already franked! The 5½p commemorates the first UK Aerial Post, between Hendon and Windsor Great Park, in 1911. A Farman biplane is shown in orange silhouette, with a green handstamp. The 10p stamp shows a frontal silhouette in grey of an Imperial Airways flyingboat, used on "Empire" routes to India, Australia and the Cape, in the 1930s, with the handstamp in orange. The "Empire" flyingboat was used during the 1939-45 war as a troop carrier, when it was known as the Short "Sunderland".

Great Commanders

Brian Sanders' design of five stamps issued on 16 September 1986 comes nearest to an "Air-craft" set. The issue marks the 50th anniversary of the division of the RAF into "Commands": Bomber, Fighter, Coastal, and Training Commands (later followed in 1938 by Maintenance Command). The stamps are all of the same format, consisting of a head-and-shoulders portrait of a notable Air Force commander, with a



side view of an aircraft in front and below, with the Queen's head in silhouette, and the stamp value, in the upper left and right hand corners. The Commanders, Lords Dowding and Tedder, Viscount Trenchard, Sir Arthur Harris, and Viscount Portal, appear respectively with the Hawker "Hurricane" fighter, famous for its part in the Battle of Britain, the Hawker "Typhoon" ground-attack aircraft, the de Havilland DH9A bomber, the Avro "Lancaster" bomber and the de Havilland "Mosquito". Dowding was the architect of the air defence of Britain during the Battle of Britain, and Harris ("Bomber Harris") was responsible for the massive bombing of Germany during the latter years of the war, epitomised in the bombing of Dresden. The policy came under heavy criticism, and controversy continues to this day.



The five stamps in common format make a superficially pleasing display, but the combination of a portrait with a view of a plane makes for a certain degree of "clutter"; Harris's tunic decoration appears at first glance to be a barber's pole sticking out of the Lancaster hull, while the DH9A red, white and blue tail might be a shoulder decoration on Lord Trenchard's uniform. And the five portraits looming in the sky, and dwarfing the planes, are invested with an almost God-like presence.

By Plane...

Transport and Communication was the 1988 theme for the CEPT Europa issues, and Britain's contribution, the issue of 10 May 1988, comprised four stamps illustrating aspects of transport in 1938. The designer was Mike Dempsey. The subject of the 34p stamp is "BY PLANE" and shows an Imperial Airways 6-AAXD *Horatius*, a four-engined biplane hav-



ing the interesting engine configuration of "two up and two down". A photograph of the plane, clearly the "original" of the stamp, appeared on the cover of the *Bulletin* for April 1988. The plane itself was destroyed in November 1939 in a crash landing. The four stamps depicted their respective subjects in the form of part of a poster, identified by the curling over of the top left hand corner, and by an intriguing part of a letter V or W following the appropriate legend in each case. Inevitably, the word "WITH" is suggested. Without delving into analytical detail, it can be said that the set happily embraces the principle of Variety in Unity, and is pleasing without being outstanding.

It is easy to be critical, but designers faced with the problem of portraying aircraft do have special difficulties. A plane shown in its proper place — the sky — is likely to be a somewhat dull composition. Moreover, representing a plane requires extreme accuracy, if one is to avoid criticisms from a large public, a fair proportion of which will be experts, and the use of the camera is, if not an absolute necessity, a great advantage here. On reflection, it is perhaps

not entirely fortuitous that we have not yet seen an issue devoted purely to Aircraft *per se*. One feels that such an issue could well degenerate into a series of "catalogue" pictures of various types, offering little scope to the more imaginative designers.

Telecom Postcard

Telecom Technology Showcase are issuing a new postcard on 11 September. Some 5,000 have been printed, of which 500 will bear a first



day of sale cachet. Price 20p, 50p with cachet. Orders/enquiries: Telecom Technology Showcase, 135 Queen Victoria Street, LONDON EC4V 4AT. Handling charge of 40p per order.

£5 London Life Prestige Book

Readers may be interested to know a little about Arthur Symons whose words "There is in the aspect of London..." were used in the introduction to the London Life book issued in March.

Symons was born in Wales, of Cornish parents, in 1865 and was privately educated, becoming fluent in French and Italian. He became a member of the noted Rhymers' Club, a group of young writers who, at the end of the 19th century, met at Ye Olde Cheshire Cheese in Wine Court off Fleet Street. Amongst the writers and journalists in this club were the poet Ernest Christopher Dawson, Lionel Johnson, Oscar Wilde, John Gray, Richard le Gallienne, John Davidson and W B Yeats. In 1896 Symons became Editor of *The Savoy* journal which published poetry, plays and literary essays; it included specialist articles on Shakespeare, Elizabethan drama and the symbolist poets of France. Symons wrote an important work on *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* published in 1900. He died in 1945.

Posting Boxes

113. Letter Box Adventure

This month we feature a photograph of the fate that befell a letter box at Mulbery Road, Northfleet, Kent earlier this year. The caravan, which was parked in the owners driveway, was lifted by the wind during the "Great Storm" of 25



January, and deposited several yards away on the nearby postbox. We are obliged to George Anderson of Pontypridd for sending this illustration.



Also shown here is another of the letter box postcards, published by David Shaw, on sale at the National Postal Museum. Number 8 in Mr Shaw's 'British Postbox Series', it features the

VR pillarbox at Pavilion Square, Buxton, Derbyshire. The cards cost 20p each plus handling charge. They were detailed in the February and July issues of the *Bulletin*.

Readers interested in letter boxes are reminded of the existence of the Letter Box Study Group — details of which can be obtained by sending a stamped addressed envelope to the Secretary: Sally Jones, 43 Miall Road, Hall Green, Birmingham B28 9BS.

Student Stamp Designs

In the May and July issues we gave details of the Royal Society of Arts Student Design Competition of 1989/90. Some of the designs in the stamp section (Student Games) were illustrated. A selection of winning and highly commended entries from the competition will be on show at the Ibstock Brickwork Design Centre, Queens Square, Bristol, BS1 4QP from 6-21 September and at the Ibstock Brickwork Design Centre, Hagley Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B16 9RD from 27 September-10 October. Details of further venues for the touring exhibition will be published later.

Illustrated Envelope Competition

To commemorate the 150th anniversary of the Mulready, Phillips, the fine art auctioneers, are organising a young people's competition for a modern illustrated envelope which should be hand-drawn or painted and addressed to Phillips, Stamp Department, 101 New Bond Street, LONDON W1Y 0AS. They should be approximately 162 x 110mm (maximum 232 x 162mm), bear valid GB postage stamps and should be posted. Entries must be received by 28 September 1990. The name, age and address of the entrant must appear on the reverse. The subject of the illustration is up to the artist but to comply with Royal Mail regulations the dominant colours must not be red or other vivid or bright colours. All envelopes will become the property of Phillips. There are three categories: 1. up to and including 10 years of age; 2. 11-14 inclusive; 3. 15-18 inclusive. A prize of a fine Penny Black will be awarded to the winner of each category; judging will be by a panel of distinguished philatelists and a commercial artist. The winning entry and some runners-up will be shown on the Phillips stand at Autumn Stampex (16-21 October).

Picture Post

Wilkinson Letter Box Collection

Last year the National Postal Museum acquired the collection of model letter boxes built up over many years by Ian Wilkinson of Chesham. Mr Wilkinson is a founder of the Letter Box Study Group. His collection amounts to nearly 2,000



items, a selection from which is now on show in the Museum's Main Gallery. Also shown are some of Mr Wilkinson's collection of model Post Office vehicles.

New TPO Livery

On 1 May the Royal Mail ran a special "First Post" train from London to Kidderminster to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the



Penny Black — a report was published in the July *Bulletin*. Included in the train was a Travelling Post Office coach in the latest livery. A photo-stop was made at Birmingham International station where the photograph reproduced here was taken.

King Edward Street Facelift

Visitors to London's Chief Post Office and the National Postal Museum will have noticed that the front of the King Edward Street building is now concealed by scaffolding. This is to enable



the stonework of the building to be cleaned. When completed the King Edward Building will look as impressive as the recently cleaned former Post Office Headquarters building opposite. Both buildings were designed by the architect Sir Henry Tanner. The old Headquarters building was constructed between 1890 and 1895 and used by the Post Office until 1984. King Edward Building was begun in 1905 and completed in 1911. Shown here is the cleaned Headquarters building as seen from St Martin's-le-Grand.

Liverpool's Posh Post Office

On 19 June the Lord Mayor of Liverpool opened what might well be the grandest post office in the United Kingdom - the new Lyceum



office in Bold Street, Liverpool. The post office and "Collections" centre are situated in an early 19th century building which housed a library, coffee house and reading room. The building, and its fine internal decorations, has been restored to its full glory.

Six Month Digest

Listed below are the issues of the past six months and the proposed dates of issue for stamps until December 1990. Any change in these dates will be notified in the Bulletin. British Philatelic Bureau codes are quoted.

*H = Harrison; Q = Questa; W = Walsall, printers
PB = Penny Black Anniversary Definitive stamps
NVI = Non-Value Indicator stamps*

6 Mar	Europa stamps (AS403)
6 Mar	Europa pack (AP085)
13 Mar	50p Definitive — "sand" (DS502)
20 Mar	London Life Prestige Book (YB001)
26 Mar	Queen's Awards stamp cards (AQ113)
10 Apr	Queen's Awards stamps (AS408)
10 Apr	Queen's Awards pack (AP086)
17 Apr	Aerogramme — new logo (QO025)
17 Apr	as above, pack of 6 (QO026)
17 Apr	4 x 20p PB book H/W (UB011)
17 Apr	10 x 15p PB book Q (UB013)
17 Apr	10 x 20p PB book Q (UB014)
17 Apr	4 x 29p book, PCP, W (UB012)
24 Apr	Forth Bridge aerogramme (QS025)
3 May	Penny Black Miniature Sheet (NZ003)
3 May	Penny Black Souvenir Book (AW053)
3 May	Stamp World exh. card (EQ019)
3 May	NPM Personalities cards (NQ903)
3 May	NPM Miniature Sheet card (NQ904)
3 May	PO Archives cards
21 May	Kew Gardens stamp cards (AQ118)
2 Jun	Belgica exh. card (EQ021)
5 Jun	Kew Gardens stamps (AS413)
5 Jun	Kew Gardens pack (AP087)
12 Jun	10 x 15p PB book W (UB016)
12 Jun	10 x 20p PB book W (UB017)
25 Jun	Thomas Hardy stamp card (AQ123)
10 Jul	Thomas Hardy stamp (AS418)
10 Jul	Thomas Hardy pack (AP088)
17 Jul	Scot aerogramme (Glasgow) (QS026)
23 Jul	Queen Mother stamp cards (AQ124)
2 Aug	Queen Mother stamps (AS419)
2 Aug	Queen Mother pack (AP089)
7 Aug	4 x 2nd NVI book, W (UB021)
7 Aug	4 x 1st NVI book, W (UB022)
7 Aug	10 x 2nd NVI book, W (UB023)
7 Aug	10 x 1st NVI book, W (UB024)
7 Aug	10 x 2nd NVI book, H (UB025)
7 Aug	10 x 1st NVI book, H (UB026)
7 Aug	10 x 2nd NVI book, Q (UB027)
7 Aug	10 x 1st NVI book, Q (UB028)
24 Aug	New Zealand exh. card
28 Aug	Gallantry stamp cards

Forthcoming

4 Sep	10p definitive — lt. tan
4 Sep	17p definitive — dark blue
4 Sep	22p definitive — flame
4 Sep	26p definitive — stone
4 Sep	27p definitive — mauve
4 Sep	31p definitive — ultramarine
4 Sep	33p definitive — emerald
4 Sep	New Definitives pack
4 Sep	50p book (3 x 17p)
4 Sep	£1 book (3 x 22p, 2 x 17p)
4 Sep	Gallantry stamps and pack
11 Sep	NPM Postal Reform cards (4)
11 Sep	£1.24 book (4 x 31p)
17 Sep	17p and 22p UL and WL rolls (500)
17 Sep	17p and 22p UL and WL rolls (1,000)
1 Oct	Astronomy stamp cards
16 Oct	Astronomy stamps and pack
16 Oct	Autumn Stampex exh. card
29 Oct	Christmas stamp cards
1 Nov	ASDA National exh. card
13 Nov	Christmas stamps and pack
13 Nov	1990 Collectors Pack
13 Nov	1990 Year Book
13 Nov	NPM Christmas Posters cards

Notes:

The issues of 4 and 17 September are subject to approval being given by the Post Office Users' National Council to the tariff increases planned for 17 September.

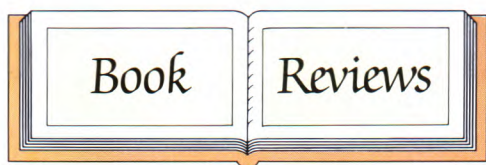
The 4 x 20p PB stamps book of 17 April has stamps printed by Harrison in covers produced by Walsall.

The eight books issued on 7 August contain Non-Value Indicator (NVI) stamps in new colours — flame (1st) and dark blue (2nd).

The Post Office Archives cards are not available from the British Philatelic Bureau; they are on sale at PO Archives and the National Postal Museum.

New "Collections" Centre

The latest "Collections" centre was opened at the new Galleries Post Office in central Bristol on 9 July. This brings the number of such centres to seven: London Trafalgar Square, Bristol, Cambridge, Colchester, Gloucester, Liverpool and Windsor. The centres sell Royal Mail philatelic products and a wide range of albums and accessories, phone cards, coin sets and a new range of Post Office Counters Ltd postcards.



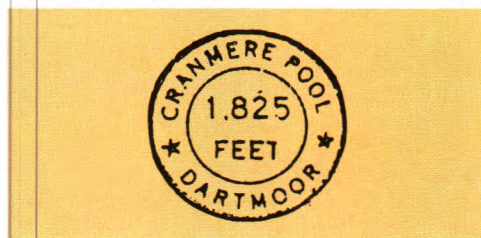
Post Office Archives have recently published two further guides. **Hand-Struck Stamps: Proof Books etc, 1823-1989** comprises a catalogue of Post Class 55. This will be of particular interest to postal historians and philatelists as it lists the various runs of proof books held in the Archives. These date from 1825 for steel stamps and 1885 for rubber and reflect the very wide variety of use intended for the different kinds of stamps issued. The collection is supplemented by several books recording the use of such stamps (and some machine stamps) within particular offices, e.g. London EC & FS, and a series of "life histories" for a wide range of instructional and other stamps.

Vacancies & Appointments 1737-1957: A Listing by Rank deals with documents in the Post 58 class and has been specially produced for the many family historians who visit the Archives for information on their forebears who were employed by the Post Office — one of the largest employers in the 19th century. These records are also of value to postal historians studying the history of a particular post town as sections of the listings are devoted to records of the appointment of postmasters, sub-postmasters and receivers. These two guides are available, price £2 each (postpaid), from: Post Office Archives, 23 Glasshill Street, LONDON SE1 0BQ; remittances payable to "The Post Office".

The Court of Honour and Championship Class displays at Stamp World London 90 were amongst the finest shown at any international exhibition; the **Souvenir Handbook** to the exhibition, edited by John Sussex, serves as a permanent pictorial record. Nearly half the book is given over to contributions concerning the Court of Honour display — "Before and After the Penny Black" — by John Marriott, James Grimwood-Taylor, Douglas Muir and Robin Schoolley-West. The colour illustrations include Treasury essays, the "old original" master die of the Penny Black and classic rarities such as the 2d "Post Office" Mauritius and Western Australia 1854/5 4d frame inverted error. A list of entries in the Competitive Classes is provided as is an alphabetical list of exhibitors.

A brief biography is given of each of the exhibitors in the Championship Class with details (and illustrations) of their exhibits. Brief details are given of the Royal Philatelic Collection, the British Library Philatelic Collections and the National Postal Museum. A tribute to R A G Lee is included, sadly Ron Lee died just two months before the opening of the exhibition which no doubt he would have greatly enjoyed. The Handbook contains three souvenirs — reproductions of essays for the 1940 Centenary issue and blocks of four of the black and blue labels produced for the 1940 Stamp Centenary Exhibition showing the Chalon portrait of Queen Victoria. Price £10, available from: Stamp World Exhibitions, 107 Charterhouse Street, LONDON EC1M 6PT.

"Posting Boxes" is one of the most popular features of this *Bulletin* and interest in old letter boxes is fast increasing. Visitors to Dartmoor can search for another type of letter box — as described in Anne Swinscow's **Dartmoor Letterboxes** first published in 1984 and recently reprinted. The first Dartmoor "letter box" was established at Cranmere Pool in 1854 and since



then many hundreds (perhaps thousands) have been provided. These comprise a container (of various types) with a visitors book, a rubber stamp (cachet) and ink pad. The boxes are often in very isolated places and difficult to find. Those who do find them can sign the book and stamp cards and covers as a souvenir of their visit. Sometimes the cards are left for subsequent visitors to take to post from their home town. In recent years "letterboxing" around Dartmoor has become quite a popular hobby with many articles in local newspapers and a few on the cachets in the philatelic press. Mrs Swinscow's delightful book gives the history of these boxes, pictures of some of them and illustrations of some of the many cachets. However the exact locations of the boxes are kept secret. A good read for the philatelist-cum-moors walker. Price £3.25, postage 50p UK, £1 overseas, from: Mrs A Swinscow, Cross Farm, Diptford, TOTNES, Devon, TQ9 7NU.

Commemorative Covers

Information given here is based on details supplied by the cover producers; requests for further information should be directed to the relevant producer and not to the Bulletin Editor.

Queen Mother. Cover RFDC86 in the Forces First Day Cover Series was produced on 2 August to commemorate The Queen Mother's 90th birthday. The cover, showing "Two Scenes — 1900 and 1990", bears the Birthday stamps, the signature of a former Captain of the Queen's Flight, a cachet signifying carriage on a special flight from Clarence House and a special Forces handstamp. Proceeds from sales to the Lord Dowding Sheltered Housing Project Appeal. Price £4.50; remittances payable to "Joint Services Philatelic Charities Fund". Orders/enquiries: Grp Capt. W S O Randle, 60 Shelters Way, TADWORTH, Surrey, KT20 8QF.

Royal Flight. Cover RAF(RV)25 in the Royal Visit Series bears an illustration of a Wessex helicopter of the Queen's Flight and a cachet indicating conveyance on a flight from Clarence House. Three variations available — (a) with 20p Birthday stamp — £2.75; (b) 29p stamp, pilot signed — £3.75; (c) 34p stamp, signed by Queen's Flight officers — £4.25. Proceeds, and remittances as above. Orders/enquiries to Grp Capt. Randle, address above.

Queen Mother. A G Bradbury of Leicester has produced four covers showing The Queen Mother in 1906, 1949, 1933 and 1936. The covers are available as a set with single stamp or set of four Birthday stamps; each covers bears a different special handstamp. Price — with single stamp £12.50, with full set £19.75. Also available is a limited edition cover (with a special handstamp) depicting Glamis Castle — £7.50 or £12.50 signed by The Queen Mother's sister-in-law, the Hon. Lady Bowes Lyon. Orders/enquiries: A G Bradbury, 3 Link Road, LEICESTER LE2 3RA.

Queen Mother Stan Muscroft has produced a cover featuring a portrait of The Queen Mother by Lord Snowdon, bearing the Birthday stamps cancelled by a special handstamp depicting the Bowes Museum at Barnard Castle. One of the Museum's founders, John Bowes, was the descendant of an ancient Teesdale family, son of the 10th Earl of Strathmore. Price £6.50 (limited edition of 250) or £9.75 signed by Penelope, Marchioness of Zetland, President of the Friends of the Museum (50 only). Orders/enquiries :

Stan Muscroft, 43 Farndale Drive, GUISBOROUGH, Cleveland, TS14 8JJ.

Queen Mother/Royal Doulton. To mark The Queen Mother's 90th birthday and 175 years of Royal Doulton, a cover has been produced by P Withers showing a portrait of Her Majesty on a limited edition plate produced by Royal Doulton for this momentous occasion. The cover, limited edition of 1,000, bears the four Birthday stamps and a special Royal Doulton handstamp of 2 August. Price £4.95 or £6.95 (add 60p overseas) signed by Royal Doulton's plate designer. Orders/enquiries: P Withers, Meadowcroft, Meadow Drive, Blurton, STOKE ON TRENT ST3 3DT.

Queen Mother. Benhams sponsored nine postmarks for The Queen Mother's 90th birthday. Covers with Clarence House, Glamis Castle, St Pauls Waldenbury and Windsor Castle handstamps of 2 August cost £7.99 (5,000 sets). A similar set of covers was serviced on 4 August, the actual birthday, again price £7.99. In addition, Benhams worked with *Woman and Home* to produce a special cover for them with a London SE1 "Happy Birthday" 2 August handstamp. Price £5. Various luxury gold covers also produced - details available from Benham. Orders/enquiries: Benham (A Buckingham) Ltd, The Bayle, FOLKESTONE, Kent, CT20 1SD.

Queen's Visit to Cunard and Royal Navy Fleet. Two special covers were produced to commemorate the Royal Visit on 27 July; one being the official QE2 cover, the other for RMS *Vistafjord*. A limited number of covers were carried on board the Royal Yacht on the day of the visit. Proceeds from cover sales go to the King George's Fund for Sailors and Cancer Research. Covers bear a special Portsmouth handstamp of 27 July. Orders/enquiries: Rembrandt Philatelics, Regency House, Beacon Road, West End, SOUTHAMPTON SO3 3BS.

Wellington Bomber. To commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Vickers Wellington a special, limited edition collection of covers has been produced, personally autographed by veterans who flew the Wellington during the war. At least one special pictorial postmark will be used. Orders/enquiries: Cambridge Stamp Centre Ltd, 9 Sussex St, CAMBRIDGE CB1 1PA.

Gallantry/Sir Winston Churchill. A special cover will be produced on 11 September, depicting a portrait of Churchill surrounded by coats of arms of the 1940 Commonwealth and part of his famous speech "We shall fight on the

beaches...". The cover with five Gallantry stamps and special "Spirit of Britain" postmark costs £4.75 or £9.75 with both the Gallantry and 1974 Churchill stamps. Orders/enquiries: A G Bradbury, 3 Link Road, LEICESTER LE2 3RA.

Gallantry. Stan Muscroft in association with the South Wales Borders Regimental Museum has produced a souvenir cover for the Gallantry stamps. This recalls the defence of Rorke's Drift in 1879 and records the names of seven VC awards. The special handstamp depicts the VC. The cover with five Gallantry stamps cost £5, signed by Major R P Smith, SWB Museum Curator £6.50. Orders/enquiries: Stan Muscroft, 43 Farndale Drive, GUISBOROUGH, Cleveland, TS14 8JJ.

Gallantry. A G Bradbury has produced a cover reproducing an engraving of St George and the Dragon (featured on the George Cross). The cover with five Gallantry stamps cancelled by special St George, Bristol handstamp costs £9.75. Limited edition of 250. Orders/enquiries: A G Bradbury, 3 Link Road, LEICESTER LE2 3RA.

Gallantry. Benham has produced a set of five covers reproducing paintings, by military artist Chas Stadden, showing five winners of the various medals. Some 5000 sets of covers are available, price £9.99. A luxury gold cover honouring Malta is also available, showing a painting of Valletta, price £7.99. Orders/enquiries: Benham (A Buckingham) Ltd, The Bayle, FOLKESTONE, Kent, CT20 1SD.

Wigan Town Twinning. The Royal Mail produced a souvenir cover to mark the visit to Wigan of a delegation from the French town of Angers from 17-22 April. The cover depicting the Red Rose and Fleur de Lys with 20p definitive cancelled by a special handstamp is available from: Business Customer Care Centre, Bolton LDO, 124 Deansgate, BOLTON BL1 1AA. Price £2.

Kew Gardens. Cambridge Stamp Centre inform us that they have available some of the Royal Mail first day covers autographed by David Bellamy, Susan Hampshire, Professor A Bell and (hopefully) Roddy Llewellyn. Details on request from: Cambridge Stamp Centre Ltd, 9 Sussex Street, CAMBRIDGE CB1 1PA.

Southend Pier Railway. To mark the centenary of the railway a cover was produced showing one of the first "Toast Rack" trams of 1890. Cover with set of the Penny Black Anniversary stamps cancelled by a special handstamp —

£3.50; with 1988 18p and 31p Transport & Communications stamps £2.50 or with 18p Transport stamp £2. Postage 35p UK, 75p overseas. Some 1989 Pier Centenary covers are still available — £2 plus 35p postage. Orders/enquiries: Southend Pier Museum Foundation, c/o Philatelic Counter, Weston Road, SOUTHEND ON SEA SS1 1BZ.

Yeovil Football Club. To mark the opening of the Club's new stadium a souvenir cover was produced on 4 August. The cover illustrates in colour a two dimensional view of the new stadium, the coats of arms of Somerset and Yeovil and the Football Club crest. A special handstamp featured the *Western Gazette* newspaper Postboy logo. Price £4, signed covers £5 to £10. Orders should be accompanied by 6½ x 9" SAE. Orders/enquiries: Yeovil Town Football Club, Huish Park Stadium, YEOVIL, Somerset.

Essex Police. To mark the 150th anniversary of Essex Police a commemorative cover will be available, with special handstamp, on 21 September. Price £3, signed by Chief Constable £4.50; postage 20p. Remittances payable to "Essex Police 150th Anniversary". Orders/enquiries: DC 547 How, Essex Police Headquarters (Fraud Squad), PO Box 2, Springfield, CHELMSFORD CM2 6DA.

Airbourne Forces. To mark the 50th anniversary of Airbourne Forces a cover showing Churchill with initial memo was produced for use with special handstamp on 22 June. Price £2.75, £3.75 signed by Red Devil Parachute Team and £5.25 signed by Winston Churchill, MP. Orders/enquiries: Philatelic Officer, Parachute Regiment Headquarters, Browning Barracks, ALDERSHOT, Hampshire, GU11 2SU.

Agatha Christie. CoverCraft have been appointed to design and produce a philatelic cover to mark the centenary of the birth of Agatha Christie, born in Torquay on 15 September 1890. The cover shows a photograph of Agatha Christie by Angus McBean (the official centenary photo) and three reproductions of book jackets of first editions — one of which being *Murder on the Orient Express*. The covers, probably bearing the 37p Queen Mother stamp, will receive a special 15 September Torquay handstamp. Price £2.75 postpaid; details of signed covers on request. Orders/enquiries: CoverCraft, PO Box 713, LONDON SE19 2HH.

September Digest

Issued in September

4 September: New Definitives: 10p light tan, 17p dark blue, 22p flame, 26p stone, 27p mauve, 31p ultramarine, 33p emerald.

Printing: Harrison & Sons, photogravure, all Advanced Coated Paper except 17p — one phosphor band. Sheets of 200.

Presentation Pack: (No. 23), £1.95

Bureau f.d. service alternative handstamp: Windsor

Note: Issue of these stamps is subject to approval of tariff increase.

4 September: 50p and £1 Machine Books containing 3 x 17p and 3 x 22p and 2 x 17p stamps respectively.

Printing: Harrisons, photogravure. 50p book contains two stamps with phosphor band at left and one with band at right. £1 book contains three 22p stamps with 2 bands and two 17p stamps with band right.

11 September: Gallantry stamps — 5 x 20p.

Designer: John Gibbs, *illustrations by* John Harwood.

Printing: Harrisons, photogravure. Two stamps 30 x 41mm, three stamps 41 x 30mm. ACP, sheets of 100. Perf. 14 x 15 (vertical stamps), 15 x 14 (horizontal).

Bureau f.d. alternative service handstamp: City of Westminster SW1

Presentation Pack: No. 211, £1.25

11 September: National Postal Museum cards featuring subjects from the "Postal Reform" exhibition. Four cards, 20p each.

12 September: Gallantry stamps souvenir cover, price 18p. Available from "Collections" centres and philatelic counters.

17 September: £1.24 book containing 4 x 31p stamps.

Printing: Walsall Security Printers, lithography. Phosphor Coated Paper.

17 September: Stamp Rolls — UL500 500 x 17p; UL1000 — 1,000 x 17p; WL500 — 500 x 22p; WL1000 — 1,000 x 22p.

Printing: Harrisons, photogravure. 22p on ACP; 17p one phosphor band.

Withdrawn in September/early October

4 September: Microscope stamps, presentation pack, stamp cards and souvenir cover.

18 September: Stamp books — 10 x 2nd class and 10 x 1st class printed by Questa, issued 19 September 1989.

25 September: 14p, 19p, 23p, 27p rust, 32p and 35p definitives; Rolls — OL (500 x 14p); MV (3 x 4p, 1 x 1p); PL (500 x 19p); SD (1,000 x 14p).

1 October: Stamp books — 50p Aeroplanes No 1; £1 Mills No. 1; £1.16 (4 x 29p) — all issued 2 October 1989.

Events

Bournemouth Stamp Fair: Summerbee Secondary School, Mallard Road, Bournemouth, 10am to 5pm 15 September. Enquiries: R W J Sharp, 72 Cardigan Road, Bournemouth BH9 1BG.

British International Postcard Exhibition (BIPEX): Kensington New Town Hall, Horn-ton Street, Kensington, London W8, 12-15 September. Enquiries: D Brooks, Epsom (03727) 20051.

British Philatelic Bulletin

ISSN — 0953-8119

The *British Philatelic Bulletin* is published monthly by The Post Office.

Compiled and typeset by John Holman at National Postal Museum
King Edward Building
King Edward Street
LONDON EC1A 1LP

Editorial Adviser Douglas N Muir

Annual Subscriptions
UK and Europe £5.50
Rest of World (Airmail) £8.50

Subscriptions should be sent to:
British Philatelic Bureau
20 Brandon Street
EDINBURGH EH3 5TT

Single copies from "Collections" and philatelic counters: 50p

Binders, to hold 24 issues, are available by post from the British Philatelic Bureau, price £5.50. Also available, to callers only, at the National Postal Museum sales counter.

Printed in Great Britain by Moore and Matthes (Printers) Ltd for The Post Office.